



JOHNSONIAN NEWS LETTER

James L. Clifford, Editor — William L. Payne, Ass't. Editor

610 Philosophy Hall, Columbia University,

New York 27, N. Y.

Vol. VIII, No. 2

April, 1948

The writing of large comprehensive histories of literature appears to come in cycles. After a period of summation, when an age puts itself on record concerning the past, there comes a period of specialized research. New manuscripts are discovered, old works re-edited, minor writers dragged into the limelight by young, hopeful Ph.D.'s, small details of interpretation given intensive treatment. This is the time of disconnected investigation, of concentration on facts rather than on basic appreciations. Then, with the resulting wealth of new details, and with an instinctive recognition of a general shift of sensibility, there gradually comes a realization that the old histories are inadequate. Thus another period of consolidation and codification returns. Readers begin to long for up-to-date re-estimates of the major figures and movements of the past. General criticism is encouraged rather than detailed investigation of minor points.

If your editor can read the signs aright, the scholarly world is now entering such a period of consolidation. Broad critical re-estimates and new historical interpretations are in the wind. And certainly they will be welcome! Consider, for example, the literature of the Restoration and 18th century. There has been no complete, adequate history of these periods for over 30 years. Gosse's *History* (1889); Garnett's *The Age of Dryden* (1895); Dennis's *The Age of Pope* (1894); Seccombe's *The Age of Johnson* (1900); volumes IX to XI of the *Cambridge History of English Literature* (1912-14) represent factual data and interpretations long out-of-date. The shorter surveys (such as that in the one volume Legouis and Cazamian) are of little value to the serious scholar. To be sure, there are the various volumes by Oliver Elton, but these do not adequately cover the entire period. His first volume, *The Augustan Ages*, came out in 1899, and his later volumes (1912, 1928)

largely follow the 19th century habit of concentration on pre-romantic tendencies.

Under such circumstances any single complete literary history of the period would be welcomed; actually we now have the prospect of an abundance of riches. There is the fine survey by George Sherburn contained in the new Appleton-Century-Crofts *A Literary History of England* (under the general editorship of A.C. Baugh); we have the enticing prospect of volumes by James Sutherland, Ponamy Dobrée, and Ronald Crane in the new Oxford History; and there are rumors of other large historical projects. The job of re-assaying the English Augustan Age in the light of 20th century sensibility is well under way.

Sherburn's history, the first to appear, is a splendid achievement in synthesis. Here for the first time is an analysis written in perfect sympathy and understanding of the principles and aims of neo-classicism, drawing together all the wealth of modern research, and summarizing succinctly the conclusions of generations of pedants and critics. Here is the wise distillation of hundreds of books and articles — a distillation deceptive in its simplicity, yet remarkably complete in coverage. To be sure, every specialist will probably be discontented with the limited treatment of his particular bailiwick; in such a survey nothing can be treated in detail. But we ought to concentrate on the full sweep of accomplishment and remember that "in this work, when it shall be found that much is omitted, let it not be forgotten that much likewise is performed." And to the critic of some particular passage, who forgets the complexity of the problem of general synthesis, we might paraphrase Johnson's celebrated remark about Richard Savage: "Those are no proper judges of his conduct who have slumbered away their time on the down of plenty, nor will any wise man presume to say, 'Had I been in Sherburn's place, I should have written a better history than Sherburn.'"

The format of the new history is excellent — with typography easy on the eyes, useful glosses, and convenient, full footnotes. The footnotes alone would make the volume a great advance over the older surveys. In so many earlier histories references in notes have been almost exclusively to books, neglecting articles in periodicals, though these are often much more valuable. Remarkably complete and up-to-date, considering the space allowed, Sherburn's footnotes can be trusted to send the reader to the most significant of the recent research in articles and books.

It would be a pleasure here to comment on our own favorite chapters, and an emotional release to point out "pet peeves" concerning omissions and questionable judgments. But those are the prerogatives of each individual reader. Here it is our happy privilege to welcome the history as the greatest single contribution to our understanding of the literature of the Augustan period that has appeared in many years.

A Special Thomson Number

Since James Thomson died in August 1748, almost two hundred years ago, it seems fitting that the summer issue of the *JNL* should be devoted largely to the author of *The Seasons*. A.D. McKillop has agreed to provide us with a survey of recent Thomson scholarship, and we hope others will send in news items, comments, or queries. Will someone offer to make up a Thomson quiz? Be sure to send in your contributions before the end of June.

The Periodical Post Boy

We heartily welcome a new project which deserves your loyal support. As you know, for the past year or so the *JNL* has been attempting to list the whereabouts of long runs of 18th century newspapers and periodicals. Now there comes along a group of devoted scholars who mean to do something about the much larger problem of the availability of all rare English and American periodicals. Under the inspiration of Hill Shine (MacMurray) the group is planning some sort of an organization, and under the editorship of Richmond Bond (N.C.) a mimeographed news letter *The Periodical Post Boy* has begun to appear. The first issue (March 1948) discusses such matters as arrangements for microfilms of periodicals, recent studies of 19th century periodicals, new publications, etc. If you wish to see a sample copy write direct to the editor at the Univ. of North Carolina.

At present *The Periodical Post Boy* declines to enter into periodical publication. Editor Bond says he does not wish to "tie the *Post Boy* to a subscription price and the resulting obligation of a regular frequency, standard size, definite number of issues, etc. Instead the interested people may wish to share the expenses by forwarding small contributions so that the *Post Boy* can live his voluntary life with hardship to none."

The Annual Register

David V. Erdman (5757 Second, Detroit 2) sends in a valuable warning concerning "the pitfalls of using, not the newspapers but the *Annual register*, to which many people go for their 18th century domestic intelligence, etc. Most of the paragraphs in the *Register* are lifted bodily out of the year's newspapers, chiefly the *Times*, I believe, after 1785, but the percentage of error in transcription of the date is appalling. Time and again I find an item given in the *Register* for February that comes from the newspapers of January or March. The day of the month is often wrong; sometimes it indicates the date of the newspaper the item is clipped from rather than the date of the incident described. Several otherwise respectable modern texts have repeated these errors."

A Request for Help

A.L. Reade (Treleaven House, Blundellsands, Liverpool, England) is now at work on a consolidated index to his very valuable *The Reades of Blackwood Hill* and the ten volumes of *Johnsonian Gleanings*. He writes that he is finding many things to revise, alter, and expand, and asks that readers of the *JNL* who have found any errors in the old indexes, or in any of the 11 volumes, send particulars to him as soon as possible. He adds: "And as I am seeking fuller and fuller identifications of individuals, will anyone able to help toward this end give me the benefit of his knowledge? People who use the work must find errors, of which of course there must be plenty — I have found a goodly number myself — and must often find mention of individuals whom they can identify with greater accuracy."

Chesterfield Bibliography

Sidney Gulick (San Diego State College, San Diego, Calif.) writes: "Since the publication by the Bibliographical Society of America, in 1935, of my *Chesterfield Bibliography to 1800*, I have been making notations of material for a supplement. Very few unknown editions have cropped up — four, of which I have seen three; a few items (~~five~~), previously inferred (like the third edition of the *Principles of Politeness*, from possession of the fourth) or else advertised for sale, or the like, have come to my attention.

Others will probably have considerable information which I need to have — for instance, what became of *The Beauties of Chesterfield*, offered for sale by Dobell in 1936. Someone beat me to it. But is it in this country, and can I see it? Next summer, D.V., I hope to make a trip across country; I'd like to stop at every library, but must plan a reasonable route and keep within rigid time limits. If 18th century addicts want to check their libraries to see how rich (or poor) the holdings are in Chesterfield items up to 1800, they'd put me under a deep obligation to them. Best would be a list by number of the items as listed in my bibliography. As a special inducement, I will send to any serious student of the period a copy of my book, cloth bound. (Offer limited to fifty books, ten reserved for British Isles.)"

News from England

We are delighted to hear that S.C. Roberts has been appointed Master of Pembroke College, Cambridge. Johnsonians everywhere will welcome this well-deserved honor for one of our most enthusiastic 18th century scholars.

Jim Osborn tells us that in the latest issue of *Oxford* (the periodical of the Oxford Society) there is an account of the 1,000th meeting of the Johnson Society of Pembroke College. A banquet was held at the college, which many alumni members of the Club attended, though owing to the food shortage the number was limited to fifty persons.

Phyllis Rowell, custodian of the Gough Square Johnson House, writes: "You will be glad to hear the House is nearly ready and we hope to open April 23d. The painters are finishing the exterior now, and then we can have our treasures home again. My daughter and I were getting some of the books back into the library all day today, and it is a joy to see the cases with their contents displayed once more. The Pilgrim Trust gave us £2500 to help put the House in order and to pay for new carpets and curtains.... Many of the panels are badly cracked but we have retained all the old wood, and though it certainly looks a bit the worse for wear, it has stood up to the fire and blasting really well." She adds a personal comment which we cannot resist including: "My little cottage suffered rather badly but is once more restored, and though I lack carpets, curtains and much linen, etc., which were all ruined by fire and water, I still have a home. Some of my furniture was smashed when the roof fell in, but we still have a table,

chairs and beds to sleep in, which is more than some people saved from their disaster." Mrs. Rowell has sent us also, with the compliments of Lord Harmsworth, copies of new printings of two pamphlets: Lord Harmsworth's *Dr. Johnson's House Gough Square*, and A. Edward Newton's *Men and Ghosts of Gough Square*.

Further News from Abroad

Some indication of the way the *JNL* keeps us in touch with the far corners of the world may be had in the following items:

Grace M. Boynton writes from Yenching University, Peiping, China, "The *Johnsonian News Letter* is a great joy and I don't wish to miss any issues.... The wild swans fly overhead at dawn and the bombers go in the same direction at noon. I wish I could live in 18th century London."

A. S. Hall-Johnson (Buenos Aires, Argentina) sends us a newspaper account of his address before the Buenos Aires "Burns Society" and also some articles, which we had never seen before, trying to prove that Dr. Johnson was a Freemason. Can any of our readers provide further information about the articles in *The Masonic Record* in 1922 by Arthur Heiron, or printed records of Masonic membership in England in the 18th century?

Through Autrey Nell Wiley we have received from David Woolley (Main Rd., Doncaster, Victoria, Australia) a list of Swift items not included in the Landa-Tobin bibliography. Most of the references are reviews, which perhaps need not be passed on; but one is a rather absurd essay which may amuse some of you. It is L.W. Ferguson's "The Evaluative Attitudes of Jonathan Swift," *Psychological Record*, 3 (April 1939), 26-44 (Published by The Principia Press, Bloomington, Indiana, price 40¢). Swift's responses to a list of stock questions are imagined, and Swift classified as a result. One review may be listed: T.S. Eliot (review of 131) in *Nation--Athenaeum* July 7, 1928, p. 470.

M.H.R.A. Annual Bibliography

Henry Pettit (Colorado) has asked us to announce the resumption of publication of the *Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature*, as prepared by the Modern Humanities Research Association. The volume for 1939 is already out, and the 1940 volume will follow soon. The remaining volumes will appear within two or three years. Pettit has been asked to do the American part, L. N. Broughton hav-

ing retired, and is assisted by Donald Bond of Chicago, Davis Harding of Yale, and Thomas Hanzo of Colorado. The editors would appreciate being put on scholars' lists for offprints and bibliographical lists, and learning of any and all contributions to scholarship. One of his chief troubles, Pettit adds, is getting the sizes of books, which he wishes to have in inches. Any help which our readers can give to this bibliographical project will be much appreciated.

The Modern Library Edition of Pope

Edited, with an Introduction, by Louis Kronenberger, The Modern Library edition of the selected works of Pope has just appeared. Not intended for scholars, the little volume does provide a new cheap edition for the general reader. There has been no attempt to provide a consistent, revised text, or to annotate the poems with numerous footnotes or commentary. The intention has been to provide an inexpensive pocket edition containing all the important poems (except the Homer), and a selection from Pope's letters and prose works.

Kronenberger's Introduction will both irritate and please Pope scholars. Many will feel that too much stress is laid on Pope's vindictive spirit, his duplicity and other discreditable qualities, and not enough credit given to his attempts at genuine moral improvement through his satires. But there will be general pleasure over Kronenberger's insistence that Pope's war against the Dunces was fundamentally "a Holy War in the service of Art," and that the brilliant personal satires were much more than mere spite. "So easily wounded by particular men that he could never be very wise about them, Pope was wisest about mankind in the mass."

Recent Books

The most important recent publication is the superb 2 volume printing of Swift's *Journal to Stella*, edited by Harold Williams. We hope to say much more about this in an early issue. The Viking *Portable Swift*, edited by Carl Van Doren, is announced for publication in May.

All 18th century enthusiasts will welcome C.B. Tinker's *Essays in Retrospect*, containing a delightful essay on Dr. Johnson. Among recent importations from England there are J.A.K. Thomson's *The Classical Background of English Literature*; Walter S. Scott, *The Blue-*

stocking Ladies (a journalistic series of studies of Mrs. Delany, Elizabeth Carter, Mrs. Montagu, Mrs. Chapone, Mrs. Thrale, Hannah More, Fanny Burney, Mrs. Vesey, and others); and two popular lives of Fielding -- by Elizabeth Jenkins in the English Novelists Series, and by M.P. Willcocks (published in this country by Macmillan). A book which we had chanced not to see before, Thomas Burke, *The English Townsman: as He Was and as He Is*, provides some amusing pictures of 18th century life.

An example of how a Ph.D. dissertation can turn into a best-selling trade publication may be seen in Robert Manson Myers, *Handel's Messiah: A Touchstone of Taste*, recently issued by Macmillan. The first printing is, we understand, 10,000 copies, and an extremely large sale is expected. Myers has privately printed some portions of his manuscript not included in the above volume as *Anna Seward: an Eighteenth-Century Handelian*, and *Early Moral Criticism of Handelian Oratorio*.

One of the important members of the 18th century Edinburgh circle was Hugh Blair, the friend of Hume, the defender of Macpherson, the celebrated preacher and lecturer on rhetoric. For years Robert M. Schmitz has been ferreting out the facts about Blair, and the results of his researches are embodied in a compact biography just published. Containing much hitherto unknown evidence, the attractive volume will be a welcome addition to the collections of all those interested in the Scottish Enlightenment.

F. Cordasco's *Smollett Criticism, 1770-1924* can now be secured from the Long Island Univ. Press, Brooklyn 1, N.Y. (price \$1.00); and the following brochure -- 1925-1945 (now 50¢).

Ernest Bernbaum's *Anthology of Romanticism*, containing selections from the pre-romantic poets and Blake, has been re-issued in an enlarged edition. From Bernbaum comes the note: "No doubt you saw the silly anti-Johnsonian maunderings in a recent N.Y. Times ("Topics of the Times"). I think that there is nothing hostile to merits of Johnson in my Notes in this Anthology." Bernbaum's revised *Guide through the Romantic Movement* is nearing completion, but he writes that suggestions and corrections will still be gratefully received. Address Jaffrey, N.H.

We had hoped to see a copy of A.D. McKillop's promised handbook: *Dryden to Burns* before going to press ourselves, but will have to postpone any discussion of this much desired scholarly tool until next time.

A Few Recent Articles

C.E. Burch (Howard) has made two valuable contributions to our knowledge of Defoe in recent issues of *N & Q*: "Defoe's 'Some Reply to Mr. Hodges and Some Other Authors,'" 21 Feb. 1948; "The Authorship of 'A Letter Concerning Trade from Several Scots Gentlemen that are Merchants in London Etc.' (1708)," 6 March 1948.

Clarence Tracy refers us to an interesting article we had missed before: Gilbert Bagnani, "The Classical Technique: Virgil, Dante, and Pope," *The Phoenix* (the Journal of the Classical Ass'n of Canada), Autumn 1947. Read it for a vigorous defense of the classical approach.

Concerned with Swift are: Irvin Ehrenpreis, "Swift's 'Little Language' in the *Journal to Stella*," *SP*, Jan. 1948; Autrey Nell Wiley, [anonymous] a piece on Sheridan's "Inventory of the Goods Belonging to Doctor Swift," *N & Q*, 7 Feb. 1948; R. Quintana's stimulating article "Situational Satire: a Commentary on the Method of Swift," *Univ. of Toronto Quart.*, Jan. 1948; "The Journal to Stella" (largely a review of Williams' new edition), *TLS*, 31 Jan. 1948.

Other articles to be noted are: C. A. Williams, "James Thomson's 'Summer' and Three of Goethe's Poems," *JEGP*, Jan. 1948; J.A. Roy, "Robert Ferguson and Eighteenth-Century Scotland," *Univ. of Toronto Quart.*, Jan. 1948; Henri Roddier, "Robert Challes, Inspirateur de Richardson et de L'Abbé Prévost," *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, Jan.-March 1947; G.W. Stone, Jr., "Garrick's Production of *King Lear*," *SP*, Jan. 1948; A.O. Aldridge, "A French Critic of Hutchinson's Aesthetics," *MP*, Feb. 1948; Claude E. Jones, "Poetry and the *Critical Review*, 1756-1785," *MLQ*, March 1948; Arthur Waldhorn, "Charles Churchill and 'Statira,'" *MLN*, Feb. 1948; E. I. Watkin, "A Stowe: an Epitome of the English Eighteenth Century" (a description of a 1777 illustrated guide to the Cobham mansion), *Church Quart. Review*, Jan.-March 1948.

For an interesting psychological analysis of Richard Savage see Edmund Bergler, "Samuel Johnson's 'Life of the Poet Richard Savage' -- a Paradigm for a Type," *The American Imago*, Dec. 1947. Bergler, by the way, assumes that Savage was no imposter. In places the approach is foolish from a scholarly point of view, but some of the conclusions are stimulating. For an excellent analysis of Johnson see Herman W. Liebert, "Reflections on Samuel Johnson: Two Recent Books and Where They Lead," *JEGP*, Jan. 1948.

Other recent articles concerned with Johnson are: R.W. Chapman, "Mrs. Thralé's Letters to Johnson Published by Mrs. Piozzi in 1788," *RES*, Jan. 1948; S.W.D., "The Johnson Monument in St. Paul's Cathedral," *The House of Dawson* (a little house-organ for Dawson & Sons, London), 7 Jan. 1948; J. Bard McNulty, "The Critic Who Knew What He Wanted," *College English*, March 1948. We hope none of you missed this last — a vigorous, challenging article. In a recent letter McNulty makes some wise remarks which we can't resist passing on: "Of Johnson's works my own great favorite is the *Lives of the Poets*, a work which I have recently re-read from cover to cover. For some reason I find Johnson's style strong precisely where his bitterest critics have found it weak — in his use of sinewy, idiomatic, plain English. The *Lives* supply countless examples of wise thoughts in plain dress."

Miscellaneous News Items

We eagerly welcome the re-appearance of the *Seventeenth Century News Letter*. If you haven't seen a copy of the latest issue, be sure to write to Arthur M. Coon, the new editor, at Sampson College, Sampson, N.Y. Send him your subscription of a dollar and any news items, comments, or queries which have to do with the 17th century.

All the comments so far received concerning our suggestion of a late afternoon get-together next December at the M.L.A. meetings, rather than the hurried 18th century luncheon, have been favorable. If you really prefer the luncheon, you had better make your wishes known soon.

To honor the 211th anniversary of the departure of Johnson and Garrick from Lichfield, to try their fortunes in London a delightful dinner was held at the Grolier Club, New York City, on March 2. Halstead Vander Poel, the generous host, provided sumptuous fare for mind and body — and also the opportunity to sit in a chair which Johnson is reputed to have used in his school at Edial (more of this in a later issue). Fritz Liebert read a special ode which he had composed for the occasion, and Ted Hilles summarized important new evidence concerning the composition of Johnson's *Life of Pope*.

On both sides of the Atlantic this spring Johnson's connections with the medical profession have been given a further airing. On March 20 in the Parish Room of St. Mary-le-Strand,

E. Ashworth Underhood read a paper to the Johnson Society of London on "Dr. Johnson and the Doctors"; and on April 5 Peter Pineo Chase, editor of the *Rd. Island Medical Journal*, presented a paper "Dr. Johnson and Other Doctors" to the Friends of the Library of Brown University. We hope the researches of both physicians will be printed.

At Columbia University on March 10 Col. Ralph Isham described the most recent discoveries of Boswell manuscripts. Like so many others, your editor wishes there were some way to preserve for posterity Isham's amusing and fascinating story of the peregrinations of the Boswell papers. Those privileged to hear him are sure of a treat.

Announcement has been made that the New York Lemonade Opera Co., during its season next summer, will give the first complete performance in America of the opera *Buffa* composed by Prokofieff on the theme of Sheridan's *The Duenna*. The opera is said to be in the style of his "Classical Symphony" utilizing old forms in a witty, modern manner.

We are sorry to hear from Ricardo Quintana (Wis.) that, as with so many of us, he is finding that huge classes are leaving him little time to complete his projected critical work on the late 17th and early 18th century. The question of the increased pressure of mammoth registrations on the scholarly productivity of our professors is a serious one. If this situation continues, aided by continuing government subsidies, what will be the result to serious research?

The New York bookseller, Charles Boesen, has recently issued several elaborate catalogues — of the library of Dr. Samuel W. Bander, and of the estate of Gabriel Wells — containing interesting 18th century first editions and autographs.

John Rylands Theatrical Calendar

Two readers have attempted to throw light on the authorship of the John Rylands Library item (noted in our February issue) — a calendar of plays performed at Covent Garden and at the Theatre Royal in 1740 and 1741. Gale Noyes (Brown) suggests that a comparison of the Rylands item with the British Museum MS. Egerton 2320, *Diary of Plays, Lincoln's Inn Fields (1715-1721); Drury Lane (1721-1738); Haymarket (1733-1734)*, attributed to Benjamin Griffin might be profitable. According to the DNB, Griffin died in 1740; however, the BM "merely attributes its diary to Griffin."

Jack R. Crawford (Yale) had the newspaper files of the Yale Library searched for references to the performance mentioned, but with no success. As he puts it, "A sudden change of cast could not have been advertised in advance, but it is strange that there is no subsequent reference to it."

So the identification is still not clear.

Newspapers in Newberry Library

From Nicholas T. Joost, Jr. (Northwestern) comes some information about 18th century newspapers in the Newberry Library in Chicago. "The following is a selective listing consisting of long runs: *Appleby's Original Weekly Journal*, 14 September 1728-9 August 1729; *Cumberland Pacquet, or Ware's Whitehaven Advertiser*, 3 November 1774-7 October 1777; *Daily Courant*, 1710; *Lloyd's Evening Post and British Chronicle*, May-November 1768, January-July 1760; *London Chronicle; or Universal Evening Post*, 1757-1790, 1792-1794, July 1795-1796, April 1797-1799; *London Gazette*, 1690-1692, 1703-1707; *London Packet; or New Lloyd's Evening Post*, 1799; *Mist's Weekly Journal*, May 1725-September 1728; *Morning Chronicle*, 1777 and scattered numbers for 1782-1785, 1792, 1795, 1797; *Morning Post*, July 1794-1797, 1799; *Old Whig; or, the Consistent Protestant*, 26 August 1736-23 March 1738; *St. James's Chronicle; or, British Evening Post*, March-December 1762, January 1764-July 1765; *World*, 1787-1789, 1790-June 1794. None of these newspapers, except part of the run of the *London Chronicle*, is listed by the Crane and Kaye census as being among the holdings of the Newberry Library, from which fact I gather that these runs are all acquisitions of the last twenty years."

More Miscellaneous Notes

From P. Laithwaite in Lichfield come two recently printed pamphlets (you may secure them for 1/8 a piece from the Lichfield Johnson Society, Burton Old Rd., Lichfield, England): a revised edition of Canon John E. W. Wallis's *Doctor Johnson and His English Dictionary*; and John Hetherington's *The Tour to the Hebrides: Its Value to the Social Historian*.

From all over the west come reports of George Sherburn's "triumphal tour as a lecturer," following his winter in California. We hope the months at Huntington brought the edition of Pope's letters much closer to completion.